



CAREER MATTERS

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U.S. AIR FORCE

COMMANDERS' NOTAM 00-4 PACAF/CC - GENERAL GAMBLE

Our number one readiness issue is people, and our top people issues are retention and recruiting. In late July, we signed up our 34,000th recruit for Fiscal Year 00, meeting our annual goal and winning a major battle in the war on recruiting. Our exceptional permanent party recruiters and our TDY personnel worked this issue hard and succeeded this year. My thanks and congratulations to you.

But one success doesn't equate to victory. Next year promises to be just as tough. We must continue our efforts in the face of the hottest full-employment economy in generations offering talented young people a multitude of work and educational opportunities. To meet that need we're committed to have up to 1,450 recruiters in America's hometowns by the end of this year and more by the end of 2001. We need commanders and supervisors to continue to encourage their sharpest troops to consider recruiting duty and to release those who volunteer. We recently approved a Recruiting Duty Ribbon to recognize these hard-chargers. We have much work left to do in this arena, and we need your best efforts to get it done. By encouraging our people to participate in the Recruiter Assistance Program (in which 12 days non-chargeable leave may be used to formally assist a recruiter), or tutoring at their local high school, or even proudly wearing our uniform while travelling on temporary duty, we can make a difference.

Recruiting is only a part of the story. We wouldn't have such a recruiting challenge if we were hitting our retention goals. In an effort to work retention issues, we held two Retention Summits to determine the most effective efforts we could undertake to keep our good people in the Air Force. We also visited nine installations to get candid feedback from our junior and mid-career enlisted members and officers, and their spouses. As a result of these forums, we began 19 ini-

tiatives to improve the quality of life for our people. It is still too early to tell whether these initiatives will turn the tide of good people leaving the Air Force. However, initial results are promising with a five and a half percent increase in the first-term airman reenlistment rate from 1999 numbers. Our second-term and career airman losses have stabilized; but we are still five and four percent, respectively, below reenlistment goals. We hope the message we send with targeted pay raises and bonuses, reduced OPSTEMPO, improved schedule predictability associated with the EAF, better medical care, housing initiatives, and enhanced communication and mentorship begin to help influence people to stay with our Air Force family.

One initiative we expect will increase the communication flow to and from every level of our Air Force is the creation of a Career Assistance Advisor (CAA) for our bases. The CAA is the commanders' advocate to help all understand the opportunities and benefits of an Air Force career. As your CAAs come on-line in the August-September time frame, use them to identify and elevate issues and develop viable solutions. A free flow of information will pay big dividends in making our Air Force a better place to work and live.

We have also begun a new advertisement campaign on prime time TV. The ads will feature our profession as a team endeavor, dedicated to a high purpose, by committed individuals. I solicit your feedback.

Our young men and women must be well informed about the tangible and intangible benefits of serving their country. I count on leaders at every level to make that happen. I also ask for your support to ensure that we aggressively work to resolve those problems negatively affecting our force's retention. I cannot predict what the long-term impact of our initiatives will be, but I can say we are listening to our people and moving in the right direction. I appreciate the great work you've done and encourage each of you to continue

your commitment to building and sustaining our great Air Force.

WHY A CAREER ADVISOR? SMSGT JODY RODARMEL

The creation of the Career Assistance Advisor (CAA) is to serve two primary purposes: address the downward trend of retention and to ensure all members are well informed on Air Force careers. A full time senior NCO billet assigned to the wing staff will give each base an "in-house recruiter."

CAA's will assist all Commanders and supervisors in developing and deploying career counseling programs within their unit. Tools such as web sites, news articles and other media avenues will be used to spread the knowledge of current programs and changes as they happen. Road show briefings are being developed for Commander's Calls and other squadron functions.

The best avenue resides with supervisors working with their immediate subordinates on a day-to-day basis. Supervisors must incorporate career counseling into their daily mentorship programs with emphasis coming from Commanders, First Sergeants and our Chiefs. This team approach will provide our people, the Air Force's most important asset, with the knowledge to make informed decision about their future.

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AIR FORCE INITIATIVES

AF RETENTION WEB PAGE

To address downward retention trends, the CSAF will focus on managing tempo, improving compensation and retirement, improving quality of life, improving care for families, and improving personnel programs.

Managing Tempo

Aerospace Expeditionary Forces will provide predictability and stability for members and their families; personnel are able to schedule training, education and family activities.

- 15% cut in man-days supporting JCS exercises
- 10% reduction in the length of inspections/inspectors used during ORIs in FY98, and an additional 20% reduction in FY99; eliminate QAFA's effective 1 Jan 98.
- MAJCOMSs implemented post-deployment stand-down programs to ensure deployed members have time to get reacquainted with their families.

Improving compensation, retirement and quality of life programs

New Pay and Benefits: recent military service pay raises, the new retirement pay choices, special and incentive pays.

Overseas duty extension incentive lump sum payment of up to \$2,000 for qualified enlisted personnel.

FY99 funding program renovates more than 260 dormitory spaces (\$20.9M), upgrades dining facilities (\$4.8M), constructs physical fitness centers (\$33.6M), and an education with library (\$6.1M).

Implemented Career Enlisted Flight Incentive Pay for career enlisted flyers.

Improving care for families of deployed personnel

Video-link provides deployed members and family face-to-face contact.

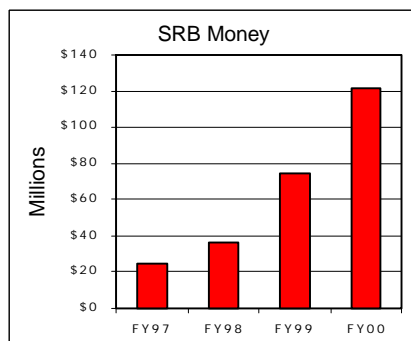
Placement of Readiness NCO in Family Support Centers established link between com-

mand and families; provides support to family members of those deployed.

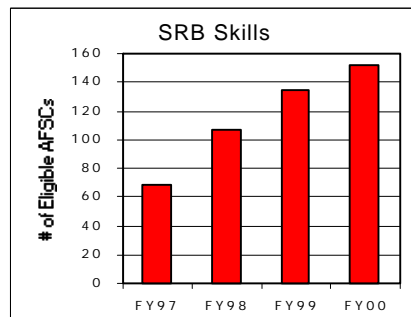
Improving personnel programs

Significant changes to Base of Preference (BOP) program for first term and career airmen; expand eligibility criteria for the First-Term Airman Base of Preference Program; implemented the Career Base of Preference Program, formerly known as the Volunteer Enlisted CONUS Assignment Program (VECAP).

Expanded Selective Reenlistment Bonus (SRB) program



Graph 1: SRB in Dollars



Graph 2: AFSCs SRB Eligible

Enlistment bonus program expanded from 5 skills receiving enlistment bonuses to over 115; bonuses range from \$1,000 (4-yr enlistees) in select career fields to \$12,000 (6-yr enlistees) in highly critical specialties (i.e. combat controllers, pararescue).

Increased promotions during FY99 (SMSgt rate at four-year high 7.98%, MSgt and TSgt rates were highest in 12 years at 29% and 24%, SSgt rates highest in 30 years at 36%); even higher rates in FY00 (MSgt rate

increased to 39%, TSgt rate up to 28%, and SSgt rate up to 51%).

Annual NCO retraining program designed rebalance the force by retraining 1,300 airmen from overage skills into shortage skills; limited retraining out of shortage career fields.

Liberal High Year of Tenure (HYT) waiver policy implemented as a temporary measure to allow selected members to extend for two years past HYT date.

CAREER DECISIONS IN THE AIR FORCE

AF Personnel Center's Survey Branch

In Nov 1999, AFPC published the results of the 1999 USAF Careers and New Directions Surveys. These surveys were comprised of over 7,100 Air Force members selected randomly. Both surveys were aimed at finding member's career intent, i.e. stay until retire, undecided, separate prior to retirement.

For officers, over 50% made their decision in excess of one year in advance. 14% decided within 7-12 months prior, and 15% decided 4-6 months prior.

For enlisted with a DOS during the survey period, 67% decided to separate over a year prior to applying for separation. One key area for enlisted was the "undecided" category. Since 1989, enlisted undecideds have shown a steady upward growth in first term (from 16% to 24%), second term (from 8% to 16%), and career (from 1% to 9%) categories.

Retention rates for 1999 missed the targets. Air Force goals of 55% percent first term and second term retention rates fell short of their goals by 6% and the career rate was 4% below the anticipated goal.

With the undecided categories rising and the retention rates falling, the need for career counseling at the 12-13 months prior to separation date is crucial. In quoting the 18th Wing Commander, "how long does it take to replace an 8 year SSgt?" The most obvious answer is 8 years, but it could be longer depending on technical school availability,

OJT training opportunities, and many other factors

There are many reasons why members stay and why members leave. The survey illustrated the top 10 reasons for both. Table 1 and 2 shows rank order for staying for officers and enlisted, respectively. Table 3 and 4 shows rank order for departing for officers and enlisted, respectively.

Evidence suggests that once people decide to separate, they don't change their mind and the decision has happened about one year in advance. Those who are the "undecided's" are the members we can influence the most. By reviewing the listing in Table 5, it is obvious some advances have been made since the survey.

The AEF concept will slow down some of the TEMPO once the scheduling is fully adopted. Pay and allowances have been addressed and the usage of the consumer price index is now above the line instead of below the line.

STATISTICS FROM THE WEB

Some key data for our members in the "undecided" category can be found numerous places. The U.S. Department of Labor offers a wealth of information for job comparisons. Here is some key data that I extracted for the city of Harrisburg, PA workforce:

- Computer operators gross pay is a medium of \$486 weekly.
- Accounting clerks gross pay is a medium of \$406 weekly.
- Electricians gross pay is a medium of \$661.60 weekly.
- Machinists gross pay is a medium of \$700.80 weekly.
- Average number of paid holidays per year: 9 holidays
- Average years with company to get 4 weeks paid vacation: 20 years
- 74% of companies provide life insurance
- 42.5% of companies pay for medical insurance
- 35% of companies pay for dental care

Career Factor	1996	1999
Availability of medical care	4	1
Overall job satisfaction	5	2
Dependent medical care	13	3
Choice of job assignment	7	4
Job security	3	5
Retirement program	2	6
Education and Training	6	7
Availability of dental care	14	8
Say in base of assignment	11	9
Leadership at unit level	8	10

Career Factor	1996	1999
Choice of job assignment	9	1
Say in base of assignment	7	2
Availability of civilian jobs	8	3
Retirement program	5	4
Leadership - MAJCOM/AF	3	5
Overall job satisfaction	2	6
# of additional duties	15	7
Leadership at wing	*	8
Pay and allowances	6	9
Number of PCS moves	24	10

*Note: * indicates no comparable item for that year

Career Factor	1996	1999
Availability of medical care	2	1
Education and Training	3	2
Dependent medical care	4	3
Job security	1	4
Dental care	7	5
Say in base of assignment	9	6
Choice of job assignment	8	7
Overall job satisfaction	6	8
Dependant dental care	15	9
Retirement program	5	10

Career Factor	1996	1999
Pay and allowances	7	1
Leadership at unit level	1	2
Retirement program	6	3
Availability of civilian jobs	10	4
Recognition of one's effort	4	5
Overall job satisfaction	2	6
Base of assignment	8	7
Promotion opportunity	5	8
Choice of job assignment	11	9
Evaluation system	9	10

All Officers	Pilots	Enlisted
Civilian jobs	Civilian jobs	Retirement program
Home station TEMPO	Number of PCS moves	Pay and allowances
Pay and allowances	Home station TEMPO	Civilian jobs
Number of PCS moves	TEMPO away	Bonuses/special pay
TEMPO away	Say in base of assignment	Recognition of efforts

- 9% of companies pay for vision care
- 2% of companies pay for hearing care
- 62% of companies pay for a retirement plan
- 31% of companies are employing part-time, seasonal, temporary or other workers and are not included.

The U.S. Census Bureau also publishes an array of data. Here are some national examples:

- Males 18-24 years of age average income is \$7.46 per hour gross, females income is \$6.81 per hour.
- Males age 25-29 with some college average \$10.77 per hour, females average \$8.89 per hour.
- Males 30-34 with a bachelor's degree average \$16.87 per hour, females average \$13.34 per hour.

- National medium for males is \$15.19 and for females is \$10.00.
- An E-3 with 3 years makes \$11.12 per hour in base pay, +\$3.66 above average for males and +\$4.31 for females in the same age group.
- An E-5 with 6 years makes \$14.28 per hour in base pay, +\$3.51 above average for males and +5.39 for females in the same age group.
- An E-7 with 12 years makes \$19.72 per hour in base pay, +\$2.85 above for males and \$6.38 for females.

Military pay data does not include any allowance or provided benefits.

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